

## Two key developments in bargaining

- Both teams sign-off on non-monetary package
- OPSEU files for conciliation to break impasse in monetary talks

Your OPSEU team met with OPTrust management for three days of contract talks last week. The result was two major – and very different – developments.

### Mobilizing pays off

First, the parties made a significant breakthrough on the non-monetary issues that were the focus of the first eight days of bargaining.

The change came after several days in which talks seemed to be going nowhere – and after weeks of effective workplace mobilizing by OPSEU members like you.

Last week, that hard work finally paid off when the employer shifted gears and agreed to address many of the key proposals tabled by the OPSEU team.

### Agreement on non-monetary package

As a result, the parties were able to sign off on a comprehensive set of non-monetary changes to our collective agreement.

This package contains real improvements in priority areas identified by OPSEU members during our demand setting process. These include:

- Alternative work arrangements
- Improved layoff, recall and job security language
- Organizational and technological change
- Union representation
- Improved grievance procedures
- Scheduling and approval of vacation and work-life balance days
- Confirming Family Day as an additional paid holiday.

Significantly, the package was reached without the union agreeing to any major concessions or takeaways. The parties also agreed to deal with several other issues during bargaining on monetary items. This includes key union proposals to fix the job classification system.

*Note: full details of all agreed items will be presented to members as part of a complete tentative agreement – including both monetary and non-monetary changes – prior to any ratification vote.*

## Monetary bargaining stalls before it starts

The agreement on non-monetary items was an important step forward in this round of bargaining. It also seemed to set the stage for a positive start for talks on monetary issues. These issues include:

- Annual wage increases
- The number of years the next contract will run
- Benefit improvements
- Classification issues
- Other items with a monetary value.

Unfortunately, as soon as the parties signed off on the non-monetary package, monetary negotiations hit an impasse – before they even started.

Here's the problem. The OPSEU team was ready to table a complete set of monetary proposals. But OPTrust management refused to do the same. Instead, they insisted on seeing the Union's proposals first. And only after they had a chance to "study" the union's proposals would they be willing to table some kind of response.

### No way to bargain

Now, this might seem like a pretty narrow "process" issue. But it's also an important one.

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# Monetary bargaining stalls ... continued from page 1

Why? Because what management was asking the union to do would give the employer a BIG advantage at the bargaining table.

In effect, management wanted OPSEU to put all our cards on the table first – without showing our team what was in their hand at the same time.

We all know that's no way to play cards. And it's definitely no way to bargain!

## Next step: conciliation

Management's approach to monetary bargaining created a logjam, and there is only one way to break it. As a result, the OPSEU team has filed for conciliation.

This means a number of things. First, bargaining is now on hold until a conciliation officer is appointed by the Ministry of Labour. This might happen in time to schedule talks in December, or it could take until January.

## Help reaching a deal

Second, it means that when bargaining resumes, there will be a neutral third party involved. The conciliation officer's job will be to help the parties reach an agreement. This can make a real difference, as long as both parties are prepared to negotiate a fair deal.

# Keep yourself plugged in!

Bargaining may be on hold temporarily until conciliation begins, but your support is more important than ever. So stay tuned for more bargaining news – and more ways you can help remind OPTrust management that we want a fair deal, and we want it now.

## Wear your OPSEU lanyard

In the meantime, be sure to keep wearing your OPSEU lanyard. It's a great way to show you are still plugged in to bargaining.

Got a question? Want to help with our campaign for a strong contract at OPTrust? Let us know. Here's how to get in touch.

All it will take is for management to come to conciliation with a reasonable offer on wages, benefits, job classifications and other key monetary issues. That's certainly what your bargaining team hopes will happen.

## Upping the pressure

If not, there is another way that conciliation can help achieve a fair deal: by increasing the pressure on both sides. That is because if conciliation fails, it opens the door to a possible strike or lockout.

This could come into play if management puts a poor monetary offer on the table. In that case, it may be necessary for the OPSEU team to call a strike vote, to increase the pressure on management to improve its offer.

That is not the way the OPSEU team wants to have to go. But we've learned from past experience at OPTrust that it sometimes takes a strong strike vote – together with your continued support – to encourage management to bargain a fair deal.

Of course, your team has only one objective: negotiating a fair contract that addresses your needs. And as the last few weeks have shown, your active and visible support is what will make that possible.



Talk to a member of your **OPSEU Mobilizing Committee**: Rita Aretusi, Sonia Baistrocchi (co-chair), Leigh Brain, Keith Duguay; Michelle Freitas, Ross Harper, Brian Hawrysh, Sean Homaie, Patricia Johnson, Myles Magner, Shirley Martin (co-chair), Jocelyn Midghall, Yaso Myl, Henry Nanes, Satwant Pannu, Richard Nelson, Joseph Rampersad, Jerry Sullivan, Dino Teixeira, Curtis Wright.

Check us out at [www.opseu568.com](http://www.opseu568.com) for more information, including past *Bargaining Updates*.

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